



Race Equality Scheme

Reviewed and updated on:

30 November 2002



**Foreword by George MacKenzie
The Keeper of the Records of Scotland**

I am pleased to present the Race Equality Scheme for the National Archives of Scotland (NAS). This document sets out how my Department plans to meet its statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The fundamental aim of the NAS is to select, preserve and make available the national archives of Scotland, promote proper archive provision, and lead the development of archive practice in Scotland.

The national archives play an important role in Scotland's economic and cultural life. The property market in Scotland is dependent on the services provided by the NAS to legal searchers, while its historical records are much used in lifelong learning and are a major attraction for genealogists, which helps promote tourism. In addition to advising Scottish Ministers on records and information policy, the NAS advises Scottish public authorities about the creation and management of their records, it advises public and private owners about their historical records and it provides a reference service to the public on all aspects of the national archives.

In all our work we are committed to ensure there is no discrimination and that people of all races in Scotland are, where appropriate, consulted and included in what we do. We will ensure that we continue to carry out our functions with the utmost integrity in terms of race equality.

This Race Equality Scheme provides us with a useful mechanism to consider what more we need to do to reinforce our commitment to equality for all the people of Scotland.

I see the NAS Scheme as a living document, which we will review and update as our services develop.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George P. MacKenzie". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

**George MacKenzie
Keeper of the Records of Scotland**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, places general and specific duties on all UK public bodies. The **general** duty obliges us to do three separate things:

- to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination
- to promote equality of opportunity
- to promote good relations between people of all racial groups

1.2 We are also subject to **specific** duties which require us to assess all our policies and functions for their impact on race equality. We must publish a Race Equality Scheme setting out our arrangements for meeting the duty by:

- monitoring our policies for any adverse impact on race equality
- assessing and consulting on the likely impact of our proposed policies
- publishing the results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring
- making sure the public have access to information and services
- training our staff on the general duty

1.3 There is a further specific duty on employment under which we must monitor and analyse, by racial group, a variety of recruitment and human resource systems. As the Scottish Executive carries out these employment responsibilities on our behalf, we are included in the Scottish Executive Race Equality Scheme for this particular duty: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/society/wtre-00.asp> .

2. Background to the National Archives of Scotland

2.1 The National Archives of Scotland (NAS) (formerly the Scottish Record Office) was established on 1 April 1993 as an Executive Agency. The sponsoring department in the Scottish Executive (SE) is the Constitution and Parliamentary Secretariat within Legal and Parliamentary Services. The NAS is headed by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland, who is responsible to the Scottish Ministers for its management, performance and future development, within the terms of the Framework Document [link to Framework Document]. The Keeper is also responsible to the Lord President of the Court of Session for the efficient management of the court and other legal records in Scotland.

2.2 The aim and mission statement of the NAS is to select, preserve, and make available the National Archives of Scotland in whatever medium, to the highest standards; to promote the growth and maintenance of proper archive provision throughout the country; and to lead the development of archival practice in Scotland

- 2.3 The principal functions of the NAS are:
- To select public records regarded as worthy of permanent preservation; acquire other historical records of national importance, or which otherwise merit preservation; divert, devolve or transfer records to other appropriate repositories; and make suitable arrangements for the disposal of other material;
 - To preserve to archival standards all records selected for permanent preservation in the NAS;
 - To promote public access to the information in the records; and increase access to the records through electronic means, the use of copies, and by producing catalogues, exhibitions and publications;
 - To provide advice, guidance and support to owners and custodians of records held outwith the NAS, especially local authorities and other Scottish public authorities; and disseminate information on and facilitate access to such records; and
 - To take the lead in the development of archival and records management practice in Scotland

3. The context for our Race Equality Scheme

3.1 This Scheme sets out how we in NAS will achieve our objectives for race equality as defined in the Race Relations Act.

3.2 While the direct impact is small, NAS has an interesting and challenging role to play in race equality. We want the information we hold and the services we provide to be available to all the people who require them. Of course, this aim takes us much further afield than Scotland. With the development of web-based technology, the opportunities are there for us to reach an ever-widening set of customers. We have an continuing task in determining exactly who our customers are and what they want. This requires us to keep a close eye on our duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

4. Meeting our general and specific duties – assessment of our functions for relevance

4.1 At Section 2.3 we set out our main business functions. The Race Relations Act requires us to identify functions that are potentially relevant to the discharging of our general duty and to assess their significance for Race Equality (using a three level marking of High, Medium and Low). We consider that four of our five prime functions are relevant to the duty and that there are two supporting function of relevance. Responsibility for the employment duty rests with the Scottish Executive, to whom we delegate our responsibilities in this area.

In summary:

Prime function	Significance
To promote public access to the information in the records and their use for lifelong learning and social inclusion	Low
Acquire historical records, which are not public records but are of national importance or which otherwise merit preservation	Low
To provide advice, guidance and support to owners and custodians of records held outwith NAS	Low
To take the lead in the development of archival and records management practice in Scotland	Low
Supporting function	
Purchasing goods and services	Low
Training and development	Low

4.2 In order to assess the significance of each function we have looked at the processes we have in place. Annex A contains a summary of these functions and Annex B lists the processes, together with the actions that we currently take and those we plan to take to take to meet our duties. To provide an insight into how we currently deal with race equality issues, below are some examples showing what we are doing and what we will do relating to some of the functions that we have identified.

4.3 Examples of meeting the general duty

- We give access to records held by the Keeper which are open to the public. We are aware that we need to market our information more effectively and to increase customer awareness of the various resources available. To help with this we have recently undertaken a customer survey to determine how we might improve these front-line services.
- We answer enquiries from members of the public, many of which come from abroad. Although unable to carry out extensive reasearch on behalf of these enquirers, we provide information on alternative sources or publications which may assist them in their research. The NAS is working on a project to make their catalogues available on-line. This project is due for completion around March 2003.

5. Meeting our general and specific duties – assessment of how we undertake our duties

5.1 Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies

5.1.1 The main policies of NAS over the next five years will relate to:

- playing our part in joined-up and modernising government
- finding out more about who our customers are and what they want
- focussing on improving our processes and procedures

5.1.2 The underpinning theme of these policies is a better delivery of all our services to all the people of Scotland and beyond. We envisage these policies will have a low impact on race equality, but we will consult as appropriate on their potential impact.

5.2 Monitoring our policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality

How NAS operates is monitored by our sponsors in the Scottish Executive. In addition, we have undertaken a review of our selection criteria for bringing in new material from private owners. The procedures for customers to comment on our services are being improved. We also carry out user surveys from time to time, the latest one being done in July 2002.

5.3 Publishing the results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring

We consult with our customers periodically with a view to improving services. Our annual review of our Race Equality Scheme will include the results of these consultations. The results of these will be reported to the SE and SRAC and published in our Annual Report.

5.4 Making sure the public has access to our information and services

Much of what NAS does is about giving access to information. Although the vast majority of information is freely available, there are a few exceptions. The main vehicle for providing the public with information about our services is our website (<http://www.nas.gov.uk>). NAS is also the major partner in the Scottish Archive Network (SCAN) which provides information on archives throughout Scotland (www.scan.org). Other archive repositories, libraries and museums also hold details of our services.

5.5 Training our staff on the general duty

We have an in-house training and development team who are well placed to deliver the training required for NAS staff to be clear on their responsibilities in terms of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

Summary of relevant functions

To promote public access to the information in the records and their use for lifelong learning and social inclusion

Approximately 12,500 people visited General Register House and West Register House during 2001-2002 to consult and research our legal and historical records. More than 4,000 letters were written in response to enquiries, around 200,000 records were produced for customers and about 1 million copies of records made during the last year.

Catalogues and indexes are currently being improved and access to them widened with the development of an on-line electronic catalogue system, which is due to be available on the Internet in March 2003. This was one of the key areas users wanted to see tackled.

Our programme of exhibitions and publications helps to stimulate and inform the public on NAS holdings.

We are also partners in the Scottish Archives for Schools (SAfS) project, which is developing history resource packs for schools throughout Scotland.

Acquire historical records, which are not public records but are of national importance or which otherwise merit preservation

Although the majority of records in the NAS are public records, we also accession private records deemed to be of national significance.

To provide advice, guidance and support to owners and custodians of records held outwith NAS

NAS operates the National Register of Archives for Scotland (NRAS), which surveys material in private hands and facilitates access to them by researchers. Advice is also given to other custodians of records.

To take the lead in the development of archival and records management practice in Scotland

Much work has been done on records management, in particular in relation to the management of electronic records and the e-Government initiatives. NAS is often asked for advice on such matters and aims to improve its national role in the implementation of standards for archives.

Purchasing goods and services

In 2002-3 our operating expenditure will be around £6 million (excluding wage costs) and a significant part of this relates to the purchase of goods and services. Our expenditure ranges from major contracts, such as the one related to the major refurbishment of our headquarters building, General Register House, to small contracts awarded to small local businesses.

Training and development

We operate an in-house training and development team, which provides specialist training as well as training in general skills and policies.

Action Plan

1. To promote public access to the information in the records and their use for lifelong learning and social inclusion (Low significance to Race Equality)

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
To give access to records held by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland	Access is given to records for legal purposes on payment of a fee and is given free of charge to bona fide historical researchers	Information is sought on the age, gender and race of users in each user survey. With the establishment of an on-line catalogue we hope to increase access to our records. Information leaflets in minority languages.	Continuing Approx 6 months 2 years
To produce educational materials for lifelong learning	Educational materials are produced on the sources held by NAS	We intend to provide a resource pack for every school in Scotland through the SAfS project	Continuing
To produce exhibitions	Access to our exhibitions is free of charge and exhibition materials are made available on-line. We have contributed to Black History month	Continue our contribution to Black History Month	Annual

2. Acquire historical records, which are not public records but are of national importance or which otherwise merit preservation (Low significance to Race Equality)

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
To select records for permanent preservation based on historical significance	NAS is very selective in the non-public records it chooses to receive out of those offered to us.	Plan to consider widening the scope of records taken in.	3 years

3. To provide advice, guidance and support to owners and custodians of records held outwith NAS (Low significance to Race Equality)

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
To provide advice, guidance and support to owners and custodians of records	Advice is provided to all who ask for it. There is no monitoring of the user group.	NAS will consider whether to widen the range of owners and custodians to whom advice is given on archival matters	Continuing

4. To take the lead in the development of archival and records management practice in Scotland (Low significance to Race Equality)

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
To take the lead in the development of archival and records management practice in Scotland	NAS seeks to disseminate information on best practice in archives through publications and meetings with other archival bodies. There is no monitoring of race equality in this.	NAS will consider the means to disseminate best practice on equality and social inclusion among archival practitioners in Scotland.	Continuing

5. Purchasing goods and services (Low significance to Race Equality)

We follow the Scottish Executive procurement policy and the general UK Government purchasing rules. While the policy does not specifically address Race Equality it nevertheless is founded on the fundamental principle of fair and open processes across the board.

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
To purchase all goods and services for the department	We follow government procurement guidelines which ensure that all purchases are undertaken on a fair and value for money basis (therefore, by implication, there is no discrimination on racial grounds)	None	Continuing

6. Training and development (Low significance to Race Equality)

Process	Background and how we measure race equality outcomes	Planned improvements	Timing
Arrange learning opportunities for all staff	For every training opportunity we arrange or provide we seek feedback from those who attended	We ensure all our training material contains appropriate reference to equal opportunities. After the publication of NAS Race Equality Scheme we will ensure all training material, where appropriate, refers to it specifically and to the Race Equality Act.	By 30 November 2002
Arrange induction for all new staff	We seek feedback from all new staff on the induction programme	We ensure the induction material contains appropriate reference to equal opportunities. After publication of NAS Race Equality Scheme, we will ensure all induction material, where appropriate, refers to it specifically and to the Race Equality Act.	By 30 November 2002